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Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 SS-15 INR-07 OC-05 CCO-00 A-01

INRE-00 /035 W
---------- 108305
O 151454Z SEP 75
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9196

S E C R E T ACCRA 6078

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS: ACOM GH
SUB: WATTS BASE

REF: STATE 218030

1. WT 0845 THIS MORNING, SEPTEMBER 15, I ASKED FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO DISCUSS "AN IMPORTANT MATTER" WITH AMBASSADOR DEBRAH, SECRETARY TO THE NRC. I WAS INVITED TO CALL AT THE CASTLE AT 0930.

2. I EXPLAINED TO DEBRAY THAT WE WERE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GOG TURNDOWN OF OUR REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO INSTALL WATTS IN GHANA. I NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH WE HAD HAD NO GUARANTEE THAT GHANA WOULD APPROVE, ALL PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS HAD BEEN SUFF-ICIENTLY REASSURING TO GIVE US AN OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF THE GOG ATTITUDE.

3. I PRESENTED DEBRAH WITH COPIES OF OUR FORMAL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE MFA AND THEIR REPLIES; I.E., OUR AIDE MEMOIRE OF MAY 8, 1974, THE MFA RESPONSE OF MAY 14 AUTHORIZING PRELIMINARY NEGOTIATIONS, OUR FORMAL REQUEST OF JUNE 17, 1975 AND MFA'S REFUSAL NOTE OF SEPTEMBER 10, 1975.

4. DEBRAH READ THE DOCUMENTS AND MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

A) THE WATTS TOPIC WAS PRESENTED TO THE NRC AT ITS SEPTEMBER 3
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MEETING, AND IT WAS TURNED DOWN. THE REASON FOR THE

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DENIAL WAS "POLITICAL FEAR" OF THE PROJECT BY THE NRC. DEBRAH
SAID: "WE THINK OF KAGNEW, AND WE DON'T WANT KAGNEW IN GHANA."

B) HE HAS VISITED KAGNEW AND SAYS IT'S AHUGE MILITARY INSTALLATION,
"A CITY OF ITS OWN WITH A PX, MOVIE THEATRE, ETC." HE ALSO
DIDN'T LIKE THE FACT THAT IT IS SURROUNDED BY "BARBED WIRE"
AND ADDED "GHANAIANS WOULD BE AFRAID OF SUCH A PLACE." (REGRE-
TTABLY, NOT KNOWING ANYTHING ABOUT KAGNEW
I WAS UNABLE TO BE VERY HELPFUL ON THIS POINT).

C) HE ASKED, IF THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS NOT PLANNING
A HUGE INSTALLATION WHY DO WE WANT SO MUCH LAND?

D) WHERE WOULD THE TOWERS BE LOCATED? HOW MANY AMERICAN WOULD
BE RESIDENT AT THE SITE? HOW MANY HOUSES WOULD BE BUILT?

E) WHY IS WATTS NEEDED?

AT THIS POINT I REQUESTED JOHN LUNSFORD, REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
TECHNICIAN, JOIN OUR MEETING. WE POINT OUT THAT WATTS
WOULD NOT BE A MILITARY INSTALLATION AND DESCRIBED LOCATION
OF TOWERS, THEIR HEIGHT, ETC. WE POINTED OUT THAT THE
REQUIREMENT FOR AMERICAN PERSONNEL WOULD INITIALLY BE 13,
WITH A NUMBER OF GHANAIANS EMPLOYED TO WORK AT THE SITE.

5. WE EMPHASIZED THAT WATTS IS A STATE DEPARTMENT PROGRAM AND
HAD ALREADY BEEN APPROVED BY CONGRESS. THE GOG WOULD HAVE THE
RIGHT TO INSPECT THE WATTS BASE STATION AT ANY TIME. ALSO
THAT THE GOG WOULD BENEFIT FINANCIALLY THROUGH LEASING OF CABLE
FACILITIES OR THROUGH PTT AND THAT THIS, IN TURN, WOULD
ASSIST GHANA IN HAVING ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR EVENTUAL
PLANSFOR A GROUND STATION HOOK-UP WITH A COMMUNIATIONS
SATELLITE AND FURTHER THAT THE GOG WOULD HAVE OUR COOPERATION
IN SENDING URGENT OR EMERGENCY MESSAGES TO OTHER AFRICAN
COUNTRIES THROUGH WATTS.

6. DEBRAH SAID HE WOULD TALK TO SOME OF HIS PEOPLE ABOUT
WATTS. HE SUGGESTED THAT I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT ON THURSDAY,
SEPTEMBER 18, TO
DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH OKAI ACTING FONMIN IN BAAH'S ABSENCE.
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I PLAN TO DO SO.

7. DEBRAH'S WILLINGNESS TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER AND HIS SUGGESTION
THAT I SEE OKAI GIVE BASIS FOR LIMITED OPTIMISM ON
WATTS PROSPECTS. OKAI PROBABLY HAS GREATER WILLINGNESS TO BE
RECEPTIVE TO OUR NEEDS THAN BAAH WOULD BE. NONETHELESS, IT IS
QUITE CLEAR THAT THE NRC FEAR OF A
LARGE AMERICAN BASE IS REAL AND ONE WHICH WE SHALL HAVE TO

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WORK VERY HARD TO OVERCOME. LEFT UNSAID WERE ANY OTHER
FEARS OF USG NRC MAY HAVE.

8. I AM CONCERNED JUDGING FROM THE KINDS OF QUESTIONS
DEBRAH ASKED ME, THAT THE PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT TO THE
NRC WAS POORLY DONE AND INCOMPLETE. WITH RCO COOPERATION
I PLAN TO PRESENT OKAI WITH AS COMPLETE A PICTURE

OF THE PROJECT AS POSSIBLE STRESSING THAT IT WILL NOT RPT NOT
BECOME A BIG US BASE. I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION OR ADVICE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE. I BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL,
IN ANY EVENT, TO BE ABLE TO GIVE OKAI A FAIRLY FIRM FIGURE ON
THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL WHO WILL
EVENTUALLY BE STATIONED ACCRA WHEN PROJECT IS
COMPLETELY FINISHED.
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